LEAF Education Demonstration College (FE)

What is a LEAF Education Demonstration College (FE)?
This is a pioneering Further Education College which uses or is working towards using farming, food production and the natural environment topics within its curriculum and meets the criteria outlined below over a minimum three-year period working directly with LEAF Education’s Regional Education Consultants. The college is at the forefront of creating an engaging curriculum and learning environment that seeks opportunities to deepen their pupils’ and students’ experiences and knowledge through balanced and informed insight into food production, farming and the natural environment.

Why should your college take part?
Members of the LEAF Education Regional Team are seeking, in the first instance, a select number of colleges and schools in their region as an example of excellence in using food, farming and the natural environment as a core element of the college or school curriculum. Being a LEAF Demonstration College will not involve completion of lots of paperwork or the undertaking of extra tasks. We want to shine a light on and champion good practice your college is already showing and to help you to build on that throughout a sustained period of activity. You might not yet have achieved all of the criteria for each level, but LEAF will work with you to help you to meet the requirements and we will be available to answer any questions you might have. There may be references in the criteria that you do not yet fully understand but we will explain these fully. We see this as an evolving engagement in the area of food and farming which is why the criteria are presented as a three-year commitment, developing from a Bronze to a Gold LEAF Education Demonstration College. There is much research evidence available to demonstrate the positive impact of young people’s involvement with outdoor learning. Research papers can be signposted if required.

How will we promote your work?
Once you are accepted as a LEAF Education Demonstration College, we will work with you to promote your activities in a way that you consider most appropriate. This might include sharing information/photos/quotes relating to your events and activities. With your permission, we will publish highlights in our e-newsletters and annual reports, thereby demonstrating your college’s achievements. Publication by social media will be in line with your college’s policy which must be made available to us. We will also champion your work with us to wider organisations within the farming and food sectors. There might be opportunities to work with wider organisations and our other Demonstration Colleges as a benefit to being a LEAF Education Demonstration College, and we would hope that this is seen as a mutually beneficial opportunity.
The criteria

Year 1 Bronze:

To be awarded this level, the college has:

1. Had training or a CPD session at the College (or on farm) on food production / farming / natural environment with their LEAF Regional Education Consultant
2. Organised an event promoting food production / farming / natural environment at the college either within or across departments e.g. Business / Science /Catering
3. Incorporated an activity or topic that looks at how food and farming has a role to play in us all having climate positive impacts
4. Had a visit from a local farmer or food production expert, e.g. an agronomist or plant scientist
5. Visited a farm or taken a virtual farm tour facilitated by a LEAF Regional Education Consultant
6. Included careers in the food and farming sector into careers events, careers advice or schemes of work.

Year 2-3 Silver:

To be awarded this level, the college has:

1. Independently organised an in-college CPD session on food production / farming / natural environment
2. Influenced another school or college e.g provided use of a growing area, shared resources on food production / farming / natural environment
3. Visited a farm or taken a virtual farm tour facilitated by a LEAF Regional Education Consultant (involving a different subject area to the bronze level visit)
4. Use of a growing area as a learning resource e.g. catering or art, either developing an area at the College which is maintained by students, or visiting an external growing area e.g. a Land Based College or community garden
5. Evidence of ideas for an action research project which explores the benefits that a focus on farming/food/environment may have on the college
6. Improved the college’s wider impact on the natural environment, including more climate positive changes for the college with reference to food, e.g. reduced food miles, considered food packaging and procurement of sustainably produced food.
Year 4-5 Gold:

To be awarded this level, the college has:

1. Organised CPD sessions on food production / farming / natural environment for a whole year group / subject area which includes other schools or colleges (independently or with support from a LEAF Regional Education Consultant)
2. Completed and shared results of action research on the benefit that a focus on farming/food/environment may have on the college
3. Established an active student climate action group within college. E.g. This could be within STEM club, Study Plus, or consider producing a college food and farming bulletin/newsletter
4. Developed a growing area which supports the learning of a variety of departments e.g. herbs harvested by catering students, crop trial plots by science students
5. Evidence that food production / farming / natural environment is seen as a priority in wider college life (includes catering staff, wider college staff, parents and local communities)
6. A whole college strategy to consume more sustainably sourced food within the college – locally sourced, British, sustainably grown etc and valuing wider college attitudes for this
7. Named a Climate Change Ambassador within the college and identified steps to achieve Climate Leader status in the college development plan.

For more information visit our website or send us an email to the address below